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ABSTRACT

Interweaving sociological/interpretive and cognitive/linguistic perspectives, this book explores the ways in which children first encounter the written word in formal schooling. The book examines the "culture" of literacy as it is introduced and practiced in a corpus of 163 basal and supplementary readers used in a representative educational division of New South Wales, Australia. The book explores the relations between these apparently simple introductory school books and contemporary theorizing about childhood literacy and schooling. After a preface and an introduction, chapters in the book are: (1) Background Considerations; (2) A Descriptive Outline of the Beginning Reading Corpus; (3) Constructing the Social World; (4) the Work of the Author; (5) Talk-on-Paper: The Representation of Conversation; (6) Characterizing Children; (7) Lessons in the Culture of School-Literacy; and (8) Text as Topic: Some Conclusions and Implications for Children and Literacy. Contains 163 references. A list of the basal series in the corpus, a list of all of the distinct words in the corpus, and a list of conversation transcription conventions are attached. (RS)

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